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Cinderella and the Diffusion of Tales
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Folk-Lore.

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# CINDERELLA AND THE DIFFUSION OF TALES.

"WE mortal millions live alone", and, at best, can only make ourselves approximately understood. In the question as to the origin and distribution of *Popular Tales*, I feel, for one, as if I were speaking into a telephone to other antiquaries very remote in space, and, may I say, a little hard of hearing. Some words in the message seem to be caught, others are obviously inaudible, others are misconceived. Perhaps the voice is indistinct.

There can be no doubt, perhaps, that I have been very generally supposed to deny that *märchen* can be borrowed by one people from another, very generally believed to maintain that *märchen*, in each country, are indigenous growths, blossoming out of the same soil of human fancy. Even my friend, M. Henri Gaidoz, reviewing Miss Cox's *Cinderella*, says that I am not a foe of transmission, *aujourd'hui*. But when was I? Perhaps in 1872, not since. How far I am thought to carry the Casual Theory, I know not. Perhaps I am credited with disbelieving that a tale can pass from Fife to Galloway, or from Scotland to England, or from France to Italy, from Russia to the Lapps, or *vice versâ*. Well, these are not, and never have been my ideas, though, of course, in thirty long years, those ideas have been modified in many ways. But M. Cosquin



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thinks, or thought, that I believed in the "Casual Theory" exclusively; so it seems does Professor Krohn. M. Bédier was of the same mind, but M. Bédier is *not* a Casualist, for he employed against me certain smooth pebbles from the wallet of M. Cosquin. Mr. Jacobs, indeed (FOLK-LORE, iv, 3, 281), calls M. Bédier "quite the casualist". *Tête de Monsieur Bédier!* as Gyp says. The young *savant* was rebuking *me* for being a Casualist, and he is accused of being a Casualist himself!

So far, I am not alone in misfortune. He "quotes Mr. Lang as his authority". Why, on this point, he assails me, and would assail me justly, if only I held the opinions which he believed to be mine. M. Sudre, whom I have not read, says (it seems) that, to my mind, *tout conte est autochthone*. I am not certain that there is such a thing as an autochthonous *man*, still less an autochthonous *conte*, on the globe at this moment. The race has been shuffled and cut too often. Finally, Lieutenant Basset, with whose works and name I have the misfortune to be unacquainted, says that I "frankly acknowledge that I believe the details have been independently developed".

Lieutenant Basset is perfectly right; I *do* believe that many of the *details* of story have been, or may have been, independently invented. But that has nothing, or nothing very obvious, to do with the question of the diffusion of *story-plots*. The details—magic, cannibalism, talking trees, helpful beasts, or heavenly bodies, many items of custom, and so forth—I certainly believe to have been evolved by human fancy everywhere, to have been part of the universal stuff of Belief. Of course man may have spread from a single centre, he may have developed the characteristic features of savage metaphysics, and opinion, and custom (the matter that *märchen* are made of) before he left that centre. These questions belong to a different science. If man had these intellectual opinions, and told tales, before he left the one cradle of the race, then there is no question of the separate invention, in different lands, of all the matters

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into which we are inquiring. If man was created, or evolved, in several places, or if he left his one centre before he had developed the ideas of magic, of a personal and animated nature, and various odd customs, then, to my mind, many of these "details" were of independent invention. The details of Pawnee and Attic ritual (in the *Bouphonia*) can hardly be so similar because they were diffused, or borrowed from the old Greek, by the western world. *That* similarity, I think, arises from the existence of similar ideas in similar minds. Nature-myths, also, myths explanatory of the world, and myths explanatory of customs, are like each other in the remotest lands, I imagine, because similar minds were at work on similar matter: on nature, and on analogous customs.

Thus I have ever tried to explain *those* similarities, though imitation must also be allowed for. Thus I explain the similarity of many *details* in stories, they are simply examples of early belief everywhere. *But the details are not the tale.* The problem of stories is different; we have to account, not for similar details, but for a similar arrangement of those details. If we find a story in Samoa and in ancient Greece, with a very close resemblance in the arrangement of details, in the development of plot, then the hypothesis of diffusion, of transmission, is infinitely the more probable. This I alleged in 1884 (in *Custom and Myth*), when discussing the widely-spread stories akin to the Jason legend. I have often done more, I have pointed out many methods, many channels, by which a story might be diffused. In 1886, in *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii, 320), I said: "Wherever human communication is, or has been possible, there the story may go, and the space of time during which the courses of the sea and the paths of the land have been open to story is dateless and unknown." I say much the same thing in *Perrault*, p. cxv (1888); and in Mrs. Hunt's *Grimm*, p. lxx (1884): "The diffusion of plots is much more difficult to explain" (than that of details), "nor do we



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venture to explain it, except by the chances of *transmission*, in the long past of the human race." Now I challenge any reasonable being to read these words, written nine, seven, and five years ago, and to maintain that I deny the possibility of the diffusion of stories, of the borrowing of stories by one race from another. In *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii, 312), I show how an ancient Egyptian *märchen* may have reached Greece, Libya, the Great Lakes, and ultimately arrived among the ancestors of the Amazulu. M. Cosquin wonders that I find so much difficulty in conceiving transmission to the Zulus. What I doubt is *recent* transmission from Europeans. M. Cosquin suggests Islamite influence, and may be right, but prehistoric diffusion is very probable.

Of course people need not read one's writings, but how, if they do read them, they can regard me as a Casualist, or rather, as exclusively a Casualist, I fail to understand. But Mr. Jacobs holds the same opinion about poor M. Bédier; *he* is a Casualist, though he actually assails the Casual Theory in my person. And I am *not* a Casualist, or only at once a Casualist, and a "Diffusionist", to coin a hideous word. That Mr. Jacobs should rebuke M. Bédier for being a Casualist, when M. Bédier is rebuking me for the same crime, while neither M. Bédier nor I be Casualists, is—casual.

How the myth that I am a hard and fast Casualist arose, is a question for the mythologist. Generally the belief rests on the fact that I once said "something is due to transmission".[1] A man denies transmission, that is

[1] I have burned my faggot as to this remark. "Something" is due to transmission—I should have said "much", or even "most" is due to transmission. The remark is in Mrs. Hunt's *Grimm*, and qualifies too much the passage from it already quoted. I here seemed to limit the chances of diffusion more than I should have done, more than, perhaps, I intended. But the whole drift of the passages I cite from *Custom and Myth*, and *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, might, perhaps, have been allowed by my critics to have weight against an isolated

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plain, for does he not say openly that "something is due to transmission"? This is a quaint logic. But the origin of the myth which makes me a Casual hero I take to be this: I have tried to explain many curious similarities in human culture by the theory of similar minds working on similar matter. Therefore the scholars who did me the honour to dip into my books, expected to find me explaining the similarity of *märchen* by that theory, and by no other. It was a case of "expectant attention"—or inattention. What they expected to find, they found, only, as it happened, what they expected to find was not there, or, if there, was greatly qualified, as I have shown. They *did* find my statement "wherever human communication is or has been possible, there the story can go" (1886). They did find similar remarks, about the drifting of a tale as far as Samoa, in *Custom and Myth* (p. 97, 1884). But that was not what they had expected to find, so "they heard as if they heard me not", and found something else. Thus "expectant inattention" explains the myth in part, but not wholly. For scholars who looked into my arid pages also discovered that I was not prepared to deny the possibilities of independent evolution. In *Myth, Ritual, ana Religion* (ii, 319) I say that "it is better to confess ignorance of the original centre of the *märchen*, and inability to decide dogmatically which stories must have been invented, only once for all, and which may have come together by the mere blending of the universal elements of imagination." Here, of course, there is no assertion of the Casual Theory as absolute, I only confess that I was (or that we were?) in 1886, unable to say which tales were diffused by borrowing, and which were separately evolved. Now I may think that I can discriminate better, though, in face of modern coincidences, not positively. I went on to remark that only one thing was certain, namely, that "no

phrase. Other admissions of phrases dubious, or misleading, or no longer expressive of my views, I have made in the Preface to Miss Cox's *Cinderella.*

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limit can be put to a story's flight, *vivu' per ora virum.*" Mr. Jacobs says, "I still fail to gather whether Mr. Lang would allow that the Samoan variety" (of the Jason myth) "must have been borrowed from abroad." I am sorry to have been so indistinct. I say (*Custom and Myth*, p. 97), "Our position is that, in the shiftings and migrations of peoples, the Jason tale has somehow been swept, like a piece of driftwood, on to the coasts of Samoa."[1] This is a strong expression for a Casualist, for one who denies the possibility of transmission. On p. 101 I give all three conceivable alternatives—spread from a single human centre —coincidence—and transmission. On p. 7 I say, "There seems no reason why it should have been invented separately." And my "position" is that stated on p. 97.

Here, then, and elsewhere, I left a place for the possibilities of the "Casual" Theory, for possible independent evolution. Mr. Jacobs now says that I have "never unreservedly pinned my faith to the Casual Theory". Apparently I have not, as I have distinctly said that no limit can be set to the chances of diffusion. I have "hedged", it is asserted, and I "claim to win on this point whether obverse or reverse turns up". If this means that I believe in the possibility of independent development, in certain cases, I do. I hold that both causes, transmission and separate evolution, may have been at work. Of transmission I feel certain; we sometimes (as M. Bédier proves by an interesting example) catch transmission in the act. Of independent evolution I am less assured, but I am very strongly of opinion that it occurs. The difficulty is to prove a negative, to prove that this or the other analogous story has *not* been borrowed. We can never be *certain* of this, as we can be certain of the positive fact that transmission occurs. Mr. Jacobs observes

[1] By the Jason tale I meant, not a form of the Greek myth, but a similar story of a hero helped by the daughter of a hostile father. I am not prejudging the question whether the Samoans acquired the Greek myth, or whether Greek poets and Samoans worked up an earlier folk-tale independently.

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that I "practically yield my whole position in granting the probabilities of diffusion by borrowing, and we would gladly know how far he has been convinced against his will." As to "yielding my position", we shall see whether I do or not, and as to being "convinced against my will", to the best of my belief I have *always* allowed for borrowing.[1] My will, my taste, has never been set against it. I have argued (*M. R. R.*, ii, 316) against the probability of *recent* borrowing, in cases like that of the Huarochiris. But the hypothesis of *prehistoric* diffusion, in the unknown past, seems to my taste attractive and romantic. I conceive that many Algonquin *märchen* really are of quite recent introduction: about the Zulu case I doubt; about the Huarochiris and Samoans I feel nearly convinced that the borrowing was not done in recent ages, say since 1540, in the former case. The remote Eskimo are so distant that, as their tales rarely resemble ours, we may doubt if they have borrowed much from recent Europeans.

My first writing on the subject was done about 1863, when I was an undergraduate at St. Andrew's. Then I merely published two tales, which I call Scotch, in the *St. Andrew's University Magazine*. I had only read Mr. Max Müller, Perrault, Dasent, and Chambers, and, on the problem as it now stands, had no right to an opinion. But about 1871-72 I wrote an article for *The Fortnightly Review*. There I stated my whole theory: *Märchen* were of extreme antiquity, of savage origin, and were the stuff of the great classical epics. This essay was published five or six years before Mr. Farrer advocated similar ideas in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1878), and in his *Primitive Manners and Customs* (1879). In the prose translation of the *Odyssey*

[1] This was written before I read again my old *Fortnightly Review* article published in May, 1873. There I say that mythologists do not accept the theory of borrowing. A remark of Mr. Max Müller's was in my mind: twenty years ago I knew little, and thought that Urvasi was—the Dawn! But I do not suppose that my critics will pin me down to opinions so long ago abandoned.

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(1879) I again stated some of my notions. I had published them, between 1872 and 1879, in many periodicals, notably *The Saturday Review*.[1] It is thus hardly correct to say that the "savage parallels were drawn before Mr. Lang by Mr. Farrer". My friend, Mr. Farrer, was writing, however, in complete independence of me. It was not a case of borrowing, but of independent evolution. Now, in 1872, I was probably more under the influence of Hegel than at present, and I may have, somehow, been inclined to a mystic theory of *märchen*-forms, everywhere present in the human intellect.

The more I have reflected on these matters, the more has borrowing seemed to me the general and prevalent cause of the likeness in the *märchen* of the world. In *Custom and Myth* (pp. 101-2), writing in 1883-84, I give the methods in which diffusion might be effected—by traders, slaves, captives in war, and women: comparing an Oriental and European story, found in Samoa or Peru, to an Indian Ocean shell, said to have been discovered in a Polish cave, among prehistoric remains. Wherever the shell could be handed on, the story might go: yet I am a hard and fast Casualist, according to many British and foreign folk-lorists.

One is not *all* Transmissionist, however; one still maintains a belief that casual, or independent evolution may account for *some* cases of resemblance. Thus (*Custom and Myth*, p. 85), one says, "We think it a reasonable hypothesis that tales *on the pattern* of 'Cupid and Psyche' might have been evolved wherever a curious nuptial taboo required to be sanctioned, or explained, by a myth." Now to say this is not to say that the legend, exactly as in

[1] Mr. Jacobs says that the "elderly lioncels of *The Saturday Review* are sublimely certain that resemblance in folk-tales is due to chance, not to transmission." As one of those animals, I think it doubtful that I am "sublimely certain", in *The Saturday Review*, of what I do not hold (except in the modified form to be explained) in my own books.

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Apuleius, or exactly as in our European form, might be independently developed. Every detail in the story is either universally human, or universal in early society. That all the details should be accidentally shaken, by Red Men and Greeks, into *exactly* the same pattern, is beyond my belief, and the fact does not occur. But that there should be developed, without borrowing, a tale of a broken marriage taboo, and of its consequences, wherever such a taboo existed, is well within my belief. I gave an Ojibway example and a Zulu example. They are so far on the classical pattern that the central situations of the transformed husband, in Zulu, and of the broken taboo and lost bride, in Ojibway, occur. But the details, in all other respects, vary from the legend in Apuleius so much, that transmission and corruption can scarcely account for the analogy. At the same time I add, even here, that "there is also a chance" of transmission by borrowing, "in the unknown past of our scattered and wandering race." Mr. Jacobs observes that "in only two" out of some dozen of tales which I have analyzed, have I "allowed the possibility of borrowing". A man who has allowed the possibility in even two cases out of twelve (not denying it in the ten) is, of course, no foe of transmission. But Mr. Jacobs is inaccurate. In treating of "Cupid and Psyche", I repeat (*Custom and Myth*, p. 85, 1884), I especially allow for the chance of transmission, yet tales analogous to "Cupid and Psyche" are, I think, of all others the least unlikely to have been independently evolved. This was not meant as a "hedge", but as a scientific statement. I believe that the Zulu and Ojibway stories are not corrupted forms of the legend of "Cupid and Psyche", but I cannot dogmatise.

By the way, to suppose that a taboo may have given rise to part of a *märchen*, is *not* to maintain that, wherever this *märchen* is now found, there the taboo has existed. The tale might reach a people who had never possessed such a taboo. The tale merely raises a presumption that, wherever it was first developed, there a taboo was in

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force. We know that it has been in force in many places; we do not suggest that it has been in force wherever the story now encounters us. It *may* have been in force, in each case, thousands of years ago, we do not pretend to say that it has been. The curious may also notice the Iroquois form of the Eurydice legend, published by Mrs. Erminie Smith in the series of the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology. One fancies that this pathetic tale *may* have grown out of the loves, and regrets, and beliefs of a rude American tribe, quite independently of any transmission from Greece, at any period. I have examined the Turkish, mediæval, and Iroquois versions, in *Murray's Magazine*, and here, too, I must remain in a balance of opinion. The story deserves the attention of students.

Thus far I am guilty of the Casual hypothesis, and I think no further, since my *Fortnightly* article. But I am not prepared to assert dogmatically that all is plain sailing even in the case of *Cinderella*. I only throw out a few hints of difficulties even here. Let us examine Mr. Jacobs' remarks. He does not think (1) *Cinderella* a good test of the continued existence of folk-tales from prehistoric times to the present. Certainly better tests might be chosen. The essence of the tale, he says, "is the rise in social condition of a girl who makes a fortunate marriage. Possibly there are such cases in savage or in prehistoric societies, .... but it would be idle to look for its origin in societies where there was little variation of social position. ..... In its inception, *Cinderella*, as we now have it, cannot have arisen in a savage society" (*F.-L.*, iv, 3, pp. 270-271). Mr. Jacobs' argument is, *Cinderella*, in essence (in the matter of the marriage), is not savage, but feudal or mediæval, for savages have not the necessary distinctions of rank. The savage details may have been introduced later, or carried on into the original form, not as things contemporary, when that form was invented, but as conventional episodes of far more remote origin. Still, these details would be, originally, savage. But we shall see

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whether the argument from distinction of rank is valid. In any case, certainly, the tale could not have been invented by shoeless savages, *as we now have it.* But we have it in many forms, from Perrault's refinements to the almost Totemistic rudeness of Mr. McLeod's Celtic form, where the heroine is the daughter of an ewe. Who can tell what form of *Cinderella* existed behind that wild shape? The tales (in my belief) have filtered down through uncounted generations, clearly not unaltered. Perrault, for instance, drops the helpful beast, the talking birds; and Scotch and Celtic forms, apart from Mr. McLeod's, drop the bestial mother. The inference is obvious. Cinderella, *as we now have it,* cannot have arisen in a shoeless country; mocassins, at lowest, had been invented when the tale, as we now possess it, was told. But in Kaffir and Santhal, as in old Egyptian, the place of the "Shoe-recognition" is taken by recognition of a lock of hair. There is no reason why *Cinderella* should not once have included recognition by a lock of hair; the shoe may be no more ancient than the tale of Rhodopis. Say that the hero cuts a lock of the girl's hair—will marry a girl whose hair answers to *that.* This involves many alterations, but my argument is that long ages do and must alter a story.

Again, the essence (as we now have it) is the rise in social life, or the restoration to an order from which she has fallen, of a girl who makes a fortunate marriage. But why should this not occur in savage or prehistoric life? Except Australians, Eskimo, Bushmen, and Fuegians, I know of few savages who are not aristocratic. There is not "little variation" (variety?), but great variety of hereditary social status among Zulus, and, eminently, among Maoris. Thus it is *not* "idle" to look for the origin of the tale in such societies. A Rangatira Maori is more remote from a slave, or a simple freeman, than a marquis from a dustman. "But *Cinderella* is monogamous." The change from polygamy or polyandry to monogamy is so ancient, in civilised countries, that, if the tale arose among a polygamous people,

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which became civilised, the necessary alteration in the story is not beyond the possibility of change. Further, in some tales, as in Santhal and Kaffir, not to mention others from Europe, in Miss Roalfe Cox's book, we have Cinderellus, not Cinderella, a boy, not a girl. On the whole, then, Mr. Jacobs' argument that *Cinderella* "cannot have arisen in a savage stage of society" seems inconclusive, as far as it is based on a belief that savages have little distinction of rank. As to shoes, again, the tale could get on without shoes, and the differences of rank exist in great force, in some shoeless societies. It would not be the tale "as we have it" without the shoe, but what proves that the tale as we have it (in which version?) is the original form? We have shown that, even in the tale as we have it, there are different degrees of barbarism. But we should remember that as the incident of the ewe mother, in Mr. McLeod's version, *may* be the freak, or the confusion, of a modern narrator, it were unwise to lay much stress on it.

If we attempt to get back to the *original* tale, we are lost. Take the Santhal and Kaffir varieties. These may be very remote from our time, may be comparatively near the beginning; or they may be very much depraved from the central, the prevalent type of the tale. Here I must "hedge", I do not know which alternative is right. But, if these forms are comparatively near the beginning, then those forms are in a nebulous undecided state. We can hardly say whether the tale is more akin to *Cinderella*, or to *The Black Bull o' Norroway*. It looks as if it might develop either way, and there is much of *The Black Bull* in some Scandinavian variants of *Cinderella*. Were I to hazard a hypothesis, it would be that the story was, originally, thus nebulous and indeterminate. It might take many forms, the hero or heroine might follow many of the diverging paths in the forest of romance. But at some time, somewhere, the prevalent type was hit upon, and, being the fittest, it survived and spread, remaining more savage among the Celts and people of the Levant, becoming more domestic

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and kindly, in Lowland Scotland and in France, for example. Meanwhile, the very nature of the incidents—a bestial mother (totemism, or worse?), a helpful beast (Manitou), a magical tree, a talking bird—are of that kind which the savage fancy undeniably and universally evolves. These things, as Sainte-Beuve says, would not be introduced now, could not be invented now, without the old examples, inherited, as I suggest, from a period of barbarism. "But", it may be urged, "if you allow that polygamous might be altered into monogamous details, why should men have retained beast-mothers, talking birds, helpful animals, revivified bones?" Well, first, even polygamous peoples have romantic love affairs. The polygamy need never have been conspicuous in the story, and, at most, a jealous co-wife could easily become a jealous stepmother. Secondly, without the talking birds, helpful animals, revivified bones, talking trees, you no longer have the story. You have to do what Perrault did, and to introduce a new "machinery", a fairy godmother (new, here), transformed rats (even that, in essence, is as old as Circe), and though Monsieur Perrault could do all this, it was a task rather beyond peasant grandmothers. To drop polygamy, if ever there was a trace of it in the tale, was very much more easy. But, even in a polygamous country, the institution need not have been introduced into *Cinderella.*

Thus I see no proof that a tale full of savage fancy, most manifest in the forms which seem oldest, and are rudest, did not arise in a savage state of society. I admit that the tale has been diffused, the tale as it stands in most versions, shoe and all, but, as Mr. Jacobs allows, this present version may not be the original. He suggests "a later and inartistic junction of the sea maiden formula" in the conclusion of some Celtic versions, and an ingenious dovetailing in of elements from another and more archaic tale, in "the earlier part". How much then is left of the original? What *is* the original? In truth, any tale may

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shift into any other, almost; *Cinderella* probably began as an inchoate shape, and even now many variants wander a good deal from the type, as it were, of the tale. A type we have, somewhat vague, indeed, but still a type. That must, to my mind, have been evolved, once for all, out of something less definite, and must have wandered far and wide. But, if so, it is urged, "if the stories have been imported into civilised lands, the savage element in them cannot prove anything as to the primitive conceptions of these civilised lands." When a civilised land had "primitive conceptions", I fancy that those were very like other primitive conceptions. A land of primitive conceptions is hardly a civilised land. The United States are a civilised land, but the primitive conceptions of the land were such as arise in the minds of Hurons and Eskimo. Again, I never supposed that savage tales were pitchforked, except as recognised folk-lore, into the midst of a civilised people, and that the savage element in the tales took root there. To my mind the chief of the borrowing, say the drifting of a tale from ancient Egypt, or where you will, to Samoa, or Lake Superior, was done very long ago. The Germans may well have handed, for example, their form of *Cinderella* to the Gauls, long before the days of Arminius, or the Gauls may have given it to the Celts, or both may have known it before the "Aryan separation". Long ere Germany was civilised these tales were old in the Egypt of the Ramessids. Palæolithic man may have had his own forms of them. Diffusion, in such times, was not like the importation of Callaway's *Tales from the Zulu* into England. That does not infect us with savage ideas; the old borrowers and lenders, our remote ancestors, were on a very different footing. This seems obvious. There are very few considerable cases of modern borrowing in civilised times. England took over Perrault, wholesale; that is a rare instance. But England had no *Cinderella* of her own, no *Sleeping Beauty*, no *Puss in Boots;* she was obliged to borrow.

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Not much remains to say. I am not a Casualist, as to tales, but a Diffusionist, who believes that there has also, probably, been independent development. As to centre of origin, I am an "Agnostic". I don't know where the tales first arose, nor where language was first spoken, and flints first chipped, and fire first intentionally kindled by man. It is a very ancient art: I shall be interested in the place of discovery, and manner of diffusion of the fire-stick, when the truth is known.

Mr. Jacobs asks whether I think that English children believe in speaking frogs or conversational tables, because they like tales of such things? The question shows how remote the querist is from comprehending the subject of discussion as I "envisage" it. I do not say that savages, or peasants, believe their folk-tales, though some may. I say (Mr. Jacobs cannot, I know, see the difference) that many incidents in these tales were invented when men were capable of believing in Balaam's ass, when sorcerers could understand the speech of birds, as in Zululand, when people, like the modern Australian black fellows, put questions to and took answers from the brutes. What in the world has this to do with asserting that a peasant, who inherits a tale composed when all nature was personal, believes the tale? Yet, when he tells the bees of a death, he is not very remote from the condition in which bees might tell him something. Nor are children remote from that frame of mind. Living in fastasy as they do, talking to animals, making appointments with familiar spirits, their playfellows, who can say what a child does, at certain moments, and in certain moods, believe, or disbelieve?

As to belief in "conversational tables", ask the Psychical Society!

There seems to exist, in some minds, the notion that persons who do not recognise India as the fountain-head of the majority of folk-tales, are Casualists. Thus M. Bédier, in his work on the *Fabliaux*, deals what seems a

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death-blow to the Indian hypothesis. No doubt the friends of the hypothesis are insensible of the wound. But M. Bédier, so far from being a Casualist (as has been said), replies to my supposed Casualism with the arguments of M. Cosquin. It is, apparently, because he rejects the Indian theory, that the charge of Casualism, and of quoting me (whom he here rejects) as his authority, is brought against M. Bédier. He says that I put aside the Indian theory, without argument. In fact, he employs, only far more successfully than I, many of my own arguments. He shows, as I have often shown, that ancient Egypt and pre-Homeric Greece were rich in *märchen* of the common type, while nothing suggests that Egypt and Greece borrowed from an India of which they probably knew nothing. Though they knew not India, tales *may* have filtered to them thence, but there is no proof of it: we cannot say that there were tale-tellers of the usual type in India before the age of the Ramessids. Probably there were, but it is just as likely that their stories had come to them from Egypt, or anywhere else, as the reverse. This argument, combined with the utter absence of features peculiarly Indian in the diffused tales (where all is characteristic of early humanity in general), is, by itself, fatal to the Indian theory. It used to be alleged that the *contes*, everywhere, contained traces of ideas purely Indian. I have shown that the ideas are universal. "It is possible", says M. Cosquin, (indeed it is certain), "but the true argument against the Indian origin would be to prove that they are in contradiction with Indian ideas." To say this is to confess defeat. Why should the ideas be in contradiction with early Indian ideas? They, too, are human. But one does not expect this to be recognised by the advocates of that hypothesis. If they will not hear M. Bédier, certainly they will not hear me.

As to the propriety of calling a tale "English", which occurs six or seven times in Scotland, in England (so far) never, it is needless to argue. The Lowland Scots and

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Celtic variants of *Cinderella* are, to my mind, closely akin, though one Celtic version seems more primitive, and others are "contaminated" by "One Eye, Two Eyes, and Three Eyes", or wander into a conclusion derived from another formula. These peculiarities occur elsewhere in Europe, not in the Highlands alone. The exclusive believers in borrowing, of all people, should not deny that the Lowland Scots may have borrowed from their Highland neighbours and kindred, tales which, whether they were ever popular in England or not, are now, in England, conspicuous by their absence. I have little doubt that the English people, at one time, possessed a *Cinderella* and a *Nicht, Nought, Nothing*. To have lost them, if they are really lost, is, in my opinion, a characteristic misfortune of the English people. To have kept them, is a characteristic good fortune of the Scotch people. About origins, I know nothing. But, if the Lowland Scots never had these tales, or, having had them, lost them, they might, more readily than the English, acquire or recover them from the Celts. The two tales which I collected as a boy, the Scotch *Cinderella*, the Scotch *Jason*, were told by my maternal great-aunt, Miss Margaret Craig, of Darliston, Elgin, and she had forgotten, or imperfectly remembered others. Her family was Lowland, connected, I believe, with the Craigs of Riccarton. But, behind Miss Craig, comes the Celtic figure of Miss Nelly McWilliam, whose young romance was stained with loyal blood in the Forty-Five. Miss Nelly was the family heroine, a *Celte Celtisante*, and it would not be surprising if these particular versions of two tales came into a Lowland Scots household from a Celtic source. I am not Casualist enough, at least, to deny this possibility. In Galloway, too, we have found the Hesione *märchen* connected with the tumulus of St. John's town of Dalry; the *Whuppity Stoorie* tale, and others, published some years ago in *The Academy*. Galloway is full of Celtic blood, and it is said that Gaelic has only been extinct for some two hundred years. For all that I



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know, Celtic may be the source of Lowland Scots tales as they now exist.

Finally, my own position has been marked, since 1872, by a growing tendency towards the Borrowing Theory. Argument and reflection convince me that, being *vera causa*, it is the better cause, the cause on which most stress should be laid. I conceive that the *details*, the incredible incidents, are universal, are the natural evolution of the human mind everywhere. And everywhere, I think, since men began the art of romantic composition, those details have been diversely combined. In this or that place, at this or that remote period, the more fortunate and artistic combinations of details were made, and, being the fittest, survived, and were diffused. But these forms could, at any moment, shift and glide into other forms, like the visionary faces which we see between asleep and awake, in *illusions hypnagogiques*. Miss Cox's volume is full of such fluid, shifting, only partially successful faces of Cinderella, or of Cinderellus, who, for all that we can certainly say, may be older than his sister. The Marquis de Carabas is brother of Cendrillon. A lass makes a good marriage by aid of a helpful beast: a lad makes a good marriage by aid of a helpful beast. But it must be very long ago that the Marquis and Cendrillon took separate paths, his course more *rusé* and morally reckless, hers more kindly, more feminine. Thus the details are everywhere, while, more and more clearly, since 1872, I have seen that the combination of details, where it is prolonged, and keeps closely to a type, must descend, must almost beyond possibility of chance descend, from a type. In face of the coincident inventions of modern novelists, I cannot absolutely deny the possibilities of the least probable coincidences. But, at least as early as 1884, I made the most strenuous assertion of the limitless freedom in which a story may have wandered round the world, and, at the same time, distinguished, in "Cupid and Psyche", the cases in which a similar

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custom, a similar *point de repère*, may stimulate to a similar, or partially similar, picture in the crystal ball of imagination.

As to priority in the theory of savage invention of *märchen*, it is perhaps enough to say that, in my early *Fortnightly* article, I pointed out the possibility of *Jüngsten Recht* suggesting the preference for the youngest child, in *märchen*, a thing to which I now attach no value. I also showed how the birth of the *Wunder-Kind*, in some tales, corresponds to certain savage magical methods of actually *making* a supernatural being, and I gave other instances. Very likely, or certainly, all this had been said many times before: without the work of Mr. Tylor and Mr. McLennan the whole hypothesis would never have occurred to me. Yet I cannot grant that my friend, Mr. Farrer, was before me in this little matter, for chronology does not admit of that conclusion. Were it correct, I should have been singularly ungrateful to Mr. Farrer, whose desertion of fields in which he is such a skilled workman I always regret. Nay, I believe his book is out of print, and this is a hardship for folk-lorists. But my critics cannot be basing the charge of Casualism on my ancient article. Probably they never heard of it; Mr. Jacobs certainly has not, otherwise he could not think that I plough with Mr. Farrer's heifer.

I am charged with diverting attention from the real nature of folk-tales, which are "literature", are "art". The *Odyssey* is art, but one does not divert attention from that pretty obvious truth by pointing out that it is a congeries of folk-tales. In editing Perrault, in a place where literary criticism was appropriate, I did speak my mind about the charm of folk-tales, quoting the apt and elegant praises of Nodier and of Saint-Victor, and adding my own humble but hearty applause. The tales need no such eulogium; we can do no more than repeat, as men, our expressions of pleasure, uttered when we were children. Now, no doubt, we can praise more subtly, but not more sincerely. But



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why should we be always doing this, not only in place (where we speak as literary critics), but also out of place, where our object is, so to say, scientific? It is hard for us to improve on the garlands which Nodier, Sainte-Beuve, Saint-Victor, have thrown to the Fairy Queen. But it has not been so hard to push the science of the subject further than they pushed it. If anyone thinks that to be interested in the science of the fairy world is to neglect its enchantments, I may refer him, for my own part, to my edition of Perrault, and to the preface of my *Red Fairy Book* (large paper edition). But better words far than mine for the fairy folk, he will find in the Memoirs of Dr. Adam Clarke, the biographer of the Wesleys. There the good man acknowledges his debt, not for amusement alone, nor for imaginative delight alone, but for the courage and chivalry in his character, to the ancient tales of fairyland, to the old indomitable boy heroes of those earliest romances. Being partly responsible for their circulation as school-books, I trust that the new generation may know something about fairies, as well as too much "about their own insides". In any case I do not observe that other folk-lorists, M. Sébillot, M. Cosquin, M. Gaidoz, Professor Rhys, think it necessary to cry "How good! how artistic! how literary!" over each fairy tale, before analysing it and comparing it with others. "The most literary fellow in the world", the successor of Mr. Chevy Slime, might find these praises out of place, if frequently repeated in works which, after all, take it for granted that we regard popular tales as good reading, and in which we endeavour to show what they are, in addition to being "art" and "literature".

I am naturally grateful to all the distinguished students who have given me such copious opportunities of disavowing heresies which I do not hold. But I would have been still more grateful if they had not, somehow, evolved the myths that I am a Casualist, *pur sang*, and indifferent to literary merit in *märchen*. If a gentleman says that one robbed

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a church, or strangled one's grandmother, he certainly gives one a chance of disavowing such solecisms. The newspapers, when they have brought accusations not wholly correct against anyone, always take refuge in the *cliché* about our "opportunity of denying" the charge. But Folk-lore would really benefit by the practice of not making, for the innocent, these enviable opportunities of clearing their character. To be less personal, I wish all good fortune to the spirited and courageous quest for the place of origin. In *Puss in Boots*, I have suggested Arabia, and my arguments are as valid as many other antiquarian arguments. But I am not my own dupe. Others may be more fortunate, or more amenable to self-suggestion.

A. LANG.

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